



Tackling tough issues, opportunities for housing, OCCC

Much-needed housing for working families and seniors. Long-delayed projects finally underway to help communities. Improved facilities and rehabilitation programs to help people turn their lives around. Governor Ige and his team have shown they're willing to tackle long-standing issues to make life better for Hawai'i's people. This edition takes a look at the real progress being made with actions, not just words.

Q. You've made replacing the O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) and upgrading jails statewide one of your top priorities. Why is that?

A. I know it's not a popular issue to take on, but the jails in each of the counties are old, overcrowded, and in dire need of modernization. We do see a need through criminal justice reform to "right-size" the population that goes to a jail and build facilities that allow us to implement best rehabilitative practices. In the case of OCCC, we have the opportunity to build a new facility in Halawa Valley and revitalize the Kalihi area along the rail line with more affordable housing, jobs and services. We're looking at different financing alternatives, such as a public-private partnership, to help us build a new OCCC without diverting funds from construction needs for schools and other areas.

Q. Why has your administration resolved to tackle some major projects that have been stalled for years instead of just 'kicking the can down the road?' Are there more big items on your to-do list?

A. We made a commitment from the start to meet challenges head-on so we can move government forward. Now it's about keeping the momentum going. If you look at the current airport modernization, we know we have a world-class visitor destination, but we need to make the investment to keep up with the times. We're finally seeing the fruits of transforming homelessness programs and making sure everyone is working together. We're also well on our way to producing the housing our community needs, improving education, streamlining state government and making the islands more livable.

Q. What progress are we seeing in affordable housing and how do you plan to continue the momentum?

A. We're making great strides to reach our goal of producing 10,000 new housing units by 2020 and have added a new goal of 22,500 affordable rental units by 2026. We have the tools in place, attracted affordable rental developers and identified land available for projects. One developer said recently that we have the best Rental Housing Revolving Fund among the 33 states he works with. The state plan recommends that we provide an infusion of \$100 million a year for the next 10 years to meet demand. Hawai'i is actually taking action and putting our resources where our dreams are. The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands also recently awarded 65 lots to families for turn-key houses with the state providing the infrastructure (See stories on Page 2).

Q. With Brett Kavanaugh's appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court, are you concerned how his views might affect Hawai'i?

A. I'm disappointed there was a rush by the U.S. Senate to complete his confirmation instead of gathering all relevant information on his character and judicial temperament. I'm concerned because I've read about his previous decisions during his judicial career, and clearly he does not share the values that many in our community share. As a lifetime appointment, Justice Kavanaugh and his views will be part of many decisions that could affect our state.



Gov. Ige with developer Doug Bigley on Maui and with DHHL officials and the Kalena-Dela Cruz family in Kapolei.

More affordable housing breaks ground statewide

To meet growing local demand and Governor Ige’s goals to help local residents, more affordable housing is coming online each month for working families and seniors in Hawai’i. Recent projects include **Kulana Hale in Kapolei**, a mixed use complex of affordable rentals, and **Kaiwahine Village for families in Kihei, Maui**. Both projects are for those earning between 30 to 60 percent area median income (AMI).

Phase I of the Kulana Hale project for seniors was praised by Michael Costa, the developer of Highridge Costa, for the amount of gap financing Hawai’i’s Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF) made available so the project could be 100 percent affordable. He called the state’s RHRF “the best in the country” for the level of funding it provides, compared to the other 32 states and Puerto Rico where his company operates. Rep. Sharon Har said the advantage of this development is that it’s in the heart of Kapolei near the rail station, providing 154 units for seniors by 2020 with rents from \$528 to \$1,357 a month. The next phase will add another 143 units for families.



Kulana Hale partners with Rep. Sharon Har and Gov. Ige. Renderings of Kulana Hale and Kaiwahine Village projects.



Gov. Ige with Maui legislators and housing officials.

On Maui, the **Kaiwahine Village project** will provide 120 much-needed two- and three-bedroom rental units for families, with other Kīhei, Pukalani, Kahului and Wailuku affordable housing projects in the works. Governor Ige extended a special thank you to Mayor Alan Arakawa for starting a fast-track system to ramp up the pace of construction.

“These are all great examples of the public-private partnerships we’ve been able to develop,” said the governor. “We’re working with developers, housing advocates and state and county housing agency leaders to improve the system and produce more units faster. Let’s continue to work together to keep the momentum going.”

Families celebrate at Hawaiian Home Lands lot selection

“Everybody was screaming and clapping,” recalls Mary Montez, who knew several of the happy families filling the Kapolei High cafeteria Sept. 30 for the most recent lot selection by the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL). Montez’s family was the last of 65 names to be called that day to choose a turn-key home in the Ka’uluokaha’i master-planned community in East Kapolei.



TURN-KEY HOMES: (top) Mary Montez, her daughter and grandson celebrate. Director Jobie Masagatani, Gov. Ige and deputy William Aila with the Wallace-Haina family.

“Please tell the governor and the Hawaiian Homes officials thank you again,” she said later in a phone call. “This is wonderful for the younger generation.” Montez, who has been on the DHHL waiting list since 1981, said the five-bedroom home her family selected will be shared with her grandson Marlon, 31, who is a veteran and a federal firefighter at Hickam Air Force Base, and his daughter.

Over the next few years, DHHL will be awarding a total of 1,000 lots — a mix of turn-key and vacant lots — in the growing community near Ka Makana Ali’i, a shopping center on DHHL land, which is generating rent revenue for more homes and programs for Native Hawaiians, the University of Hawai’i West O’ahu campus and the Kapolei rail station. At the event, Governor Ige praised DHHL director Jobie Masagatani and her staff for offering different creative housing options to families, such as rent-to-own projects, turn-key and vacant lot development, and partnerships with nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity.

“I’m excited about the changes I’m seeing at DHHL,” said the governor. “It’s the opportunity for beneficiaries to fulfill the objectives of Prince Kūhiō — giving Native Hawaiian people access to their lands so they can better their lives,” said the governor. “I’ve made DHHL a funding priority, allocating the highest level of funding in the department’s history — more than double what was set aside previously.”

Director Masagatani said the selection ceremony was the culmination of a two-year-long DHHL initiative to reinvigorate the vacant lot and turnkey home awards program statewide. “This wouldn’t be possible without a team of people, including our staff, as well as our financial sector and construction industry partners, working together on behalf of our beneficiaries.”

Ige team calls for jail upgrades and a new OCCC

Why the push for jail improvements statewide? Because current conditions and calls for criminal justice reform are making this an issue the community can no longer ignore, say state officials. Antiquated buildings with outdated technology pose serious risks of overcrowding, safety, and security for inmates, staff and the community alike. This is true for both prisons and jails, where conditions such as those at the O'ahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC), Hawai'i's largest jail, can lead to crises that could be prevented.

For decades, Hawai'i's officials have discussed "right-sizing" jails across the state to better serve the needs of those incarcerated. Now, the Ige administration has made major progress toward this goal. The governor recently accepted the final environmental impact statement (EIS) to relocate OCCC from its current Kalihi location to the Animal Quarantine Station site in Halawa Valley. The EIS also envisions an expanded Women's Community Correctional Center in Kailua to accommodate female inmates currently housed at OCCC.

"Building a new OCCC facility is one of my top priorities," said Governor Ige

at an August news conference announcing acceptance of the EIS. "It's also an opportunity to reposition Kalihi for a new economic development future, with job creation, affordable housing, and open spaces, creating an invigorated livable, walkable community." Department of Public Safety (PSD) director Nolan Espinda explained, "The current OCCC is drastically outdated and overcrowded. The 40-year-old jail now houses more than 1,200 inmates in facilities originally designed for 628 inmates and modified over the years to house 954. OCCC no longer meets PSD and community needs. The severe overcrowding places the state under a cloud of liability that could threaten autonomous control and supervision of OCCC and other jails throughout the state. We cannot wait any longer."

OCCC is an aging facility dating back to the 1950s with a current population of 1,222. The new facility, projected for completion in 2023, would include 1,044 detention beds and 291 beds for those transitioning to life back in the community, including work furlough participants. Governor Ige and PSD director Espinda have pointed to the challenge faced by the state's executive branch in having no say on the legal outcome for offenders because the size of the jail population depends on the courts' adjudication of crimes, which includes pretrial detainees. "Clearly, we see an avenue through judicial reform to right-size the state's jail population," said the governor. "What the new facility is trying to find is a balance between incarcerating those who have violated the law, those who are awaiting trial, and those transitioning back to the community to become contributing members of society."

Espinda acknowledged community efforts aimed at criminal justice reform and reduction of jail and prison populations. "We're looking at different tactics and strategies employed by the courts and treatment programs for drug and alcohol addiction, he said." Espinda referred to task force reports due at the end of this year to address issues of overcrowding and rehabilitation. "We want to keep costs down, be culturally sensitive, and focus on 'best practices' being used successfully nationwide," he added. Governor Ige said the state will be working to arrive at the best community solution. "Public Safety is an active participant in both the HCR 85 (2016, amended in 2017) and HCR 134 (2017) Task Forces. PSD and this administration will apply full consideration to the recommendations made in the task forces' final reports and will work closely with both the task forces and the Legislature as we plan for a new OCCC facility," he said.

The stakes are high, considering that 95 percent of inmates will be released back to their communities. Without effective programs while incarcerated, inmates are more likely to reoffend and return to prison. Said Espinda, "We need adequate space to provide for rehabilitation so inmates can learn to provide for themselves as they transition back to their communities. This is why replacing OCCC with a modern facility has been a goal of the department for over a decade."

He added that plans are "well underway" to address overcrowding in jails on Maui, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i island with funding already provided by the Legislature. Plans call for adding bed space to each of the neighbor island jails. Construction for new Hawai'i Community Correctional Center and Kaua'i Community Correctional Center housing is expected to start in October 2019, with completion by November 2020. Construction of additional Maui Community Correctional Center bed space is expected to begin in December 2019 with completion by January 2021.

Governor Ige said the state will be looking at different options to finance construction of the new OCCC, including general obligation bonds and a public-private partnership. And, what about those who say the money would be better spent preventing incarceration? "Certainly, the design and size of a new facility will take into account best practices, but adjudication and sentencing are driven by the justice system," said the governor. "Our responsibility on the executive branch side is to have a humane place where people can receive needed services during their incarceration." To learn more about the future of OCCC, visit DPS.Hawaii.gov/OCCC-future-plans.



Gov. Ige describes the need to replace OCCC. At WCCC, graduates and teachers of the Intermediate Culinary Class, one of the skills training programs.

What is the difference between a jail like OCCC and a prison like Halawa Correctional Facility?

- **Jails** house 1) pretrial detainees, 2) inmates in their final year of incarceration and transitioning to the community through the furlough program, and 3) those with sentences of less than a year.
- **Prisons** house those serving extended sentences.

Governor signs historic sister-state pact with Goa, India

In business, culture, natural beauty and quality of life indicators, Hawai'i and Goa, India could indeed be sisters. Goa is visited by large numbers of international tourists each year for its white sand beaches and world heritage architecture. It also has a top ranking for "best quality of life" in India and the highest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita among all Indian states.

For those and other reasons, Governor Ige has signed a sister-state agreement — Hawai'i's first with a jurisdiction in India. The agreement will promote trade, tourism, information technology and an exchange of health and wellness, agriculture, culinary, education and cultural programs between private sector organizations and universities of both states. "The U.S.-India partnership is an important one, and the Hawai'i-Goa relationship will help strengthen this bond," the governor said. "We welcome people from Goa to invest in Hawai'i's economy and share their traditional and cultural values with us."



Gov. Ige and Gurudas Pilarnekar, Goa's art and culture director, make history.

U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard met with political leaders of Goa in 2014 about establishing a closer relationship with Hawai'i. Dr. Raj Kumar, president of the Hawai'i chapter of the Indian-America Friendship Council, state Sen. Brian Taniguchi and former state Rep. Ken Ito were also instrumental in passing legislation for this relationship. "Our new sister-state relationship allows Hawai'i to advance business, academic and cultural opportunities," said Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism director Luis Salaveria. India is not only the world's largest democracy, but also has one of the fastest-growing economies.

LEAD help for the homeless instead of jail

A new pilot program emphasizing treatment and social services rather than jail for those who commit minor offenses has already helped 33 people, including one man who had been homeless for more than eight years, said Governor Ige. The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, funded by the Department of Health, involves a partnership of more than 30 community organizations.

"Government cannot resolve homelessness on its own," the governor said. "The LEAD program is strengthening the bonds of trust and understanding between law enforcement and the most vulnerable members of our community." The pilot is based on a similar project in Seattle that has a track record of success. In that program, 55 percent of participants received drug treatment through LEAD and 40 percent found housing.



Heather Lusk, HHHRC executive director, and HPD officers join Gov. Ige to announce the new LEAD initiative offering help rather than jail for the homeless.

Through the local LEAD project, the Honolulu Police Department and the Department of Public Safety refer those who commit low-level victimless crimes to the Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC). The LEAD coalition will offer housing, substance abuse treatment and other services to improve public safety in downtown Honolulu. "LEAD will provide law enforcement with alternatives to arrest or citation," said Heather Lusk, newly named HHHRC executive director.



TEAMWORK: Gov. Ige with federal, state and county partners at Hanapepe River Bridge.

Kaua'i bridge project launched

The Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) celebrated the start last month of the Hanapepe River Bridge project on Kaua'i — a collaboration between HDOT and the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Central Federal Lands Division.

"We are very grateful for this partnership to replace the 80-year-old bridge, and we look forward to working with FHWA on other statewide highway projects," said Governor Ige. The project is projected for completion in summer 2020. The cost is \$35.2 million, 80 percent of which is provided by federal funding and 20 percent from state funding.

Contact us at governor.hawaii.gov
Executive Chambers, State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0034 | Fax: (808) 586-0006

Hilo Office (808) 974-6262 | Kona Office (808) 323-4542 |
Maui Office (808) 243-5798 | Kaua'i Office (808) 274-3100

Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides updates from the State Capitol. As we work to become paperless, the newsletter is available online and via subscription. Check the governor's website at governor.hawaii.gov to subscribe. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and <https://www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge>. (Print copies by Hawai'i Correctional Industries)